

**COUNCIL WORK SESSION  
CITY OF WATERTOWN  
JANUARY 9, 2006  
7:00 P.M.**

**MAYOR JEFFREY E. GRAHAM PRESIDING**

**PRESENT:**           **COUNCILMAN STEPHEN J. BRADLEY  
COUNCILMAN PETER L. CLOUGH  
COUNCILMAN TIMOTHY R. LABOUF  
COUNCILMAN JEFFREY M. SMITH  
MAYOR GRAHAM**

**ALSO PRESENT:**   **CITY MANAGER MARY M. CORRIVEAU**

**Presentations:**

**Downtown Streetscape Project Update**

Michael Lumbis, City Planner, presented to Council an update on the Downtown Streetscape Project. The Federal Transportation Bill, passed in August of 2005, contained a line item for \$2,400,000 for the Downtown Streetscape Enhancement Project. The funding represents a final piece of support needed to bid and construct the project.

Authorization by NYSDOT has been granted and the City's design engineers, CHA, have developed a proposed project schedule to be completed in the Spring of 2007.

Councilman Clough stated that the report mentions a local match for the project and wanted to know when the City will find out when that is required.

Mr. Lumbis replied that DOT will be checking with Albany asking if other grants can be used as a match but the City will know by the next Council meeting.

Mr. Lumbis said the allotment each year is reviewed. For 2005, he said, the allotment was at 85% however the total match for five years is less.

Mayor Graham asked what amount of the total \$5,375,000 for the project was going to be local money.

Mr. Lumbis answered about \$600,000 or so.

## **Fence Permits**

Code Enforcement Supervisor Shawn McWayne presented to Council a problem faced by Code Enforcement regarding City fence violations. There are currently two residences in violation of the regulations due to their height and transparency and the owners have been notified. Mr. McWayne said the situation may be avoidable in the future by requiring a no-fee permit to install a fence.

Mrs. Corriveau remarked that this issue was discussed in 2003 regarding the height of fences within the City. She stated that Mr. McWayne recommended the City institute a permit for the installation of fences so they conform to the City Codes.

Councilman Clough asked how the fences, shown in photos, were in violation of Codes.

Mr. McWayne said the fences were not 50% transparent and were over the allowable height.

Councilman LaBouf inquired if any outreach has been made to the people whose fences are in violation of Code.

Mr. McWayne replied that there was no response from those residences.

Councilman LaBouf said the idea of a fence permit is a good idea and he does not want to see any other unsafe situations.

Mayor Graham asked if fence companies are aware of the ordinance.

Mr. McWayne said they are aware but it is the property owners' responsibility for following the Code, not the companies. He said the City would have to do a lot of advertising to get this message out.

Councilman Bradley stated he thought the only issue is the transparency of the fences.

Mayor Graham asked if the transparency factor limited the fences only to chain-link metal.

Mr. McWayne replied that the transparency of picket fences would not violate the Code.

Mrs. Corriveau said this is not an issue of aesthetics but more of a safety issue. She said the focus in 2003 was on safety.

She also said that instituting permits protects the City, property owner and fence companies.

Councilman Smith asked if it is the contractor's responsibility to follow the Codes.

Mr. McWayne answered that if the contractors don't follow regulations, they could end up in court.

Councilman Bradley said that he has no problem with instituting a fence permit.

**Brownfield Update – Ogilvie and Water Street Properties**

Kenneth A. Mix, Planning and Community Development Coordinator, presented to the Council results of Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessments for the Water Street property owned by the City of Watertown, and the former Ogilvie site.

Councilman LaBouf asked what the City could do to take title of the Ogilvie site.

Mrs. Corriveau said the City would need to get the Deed.

Mr. Mix commented that if the City takes title, the DEC will tell the City to immediately clean up the site. He said the program will pay 90% of the clean up.

Councilman Smith asked if the City would use more Brownfield money to clean up the site.

Mayor Graham said the costs for clean up will be about \$20,000.

Councilman LaBouf said the City is on the right track with the project. He said it lends itself for more development sites for more long term projects.

Councilman Clough inquired about other sites in the City, including the site across from the old County Jail. He said there is someone interested in that site.

Mrs. Corriveau said the City has to step into the chain of title to sell that site.



Mayor Graham said Council received a letter from Mr. Wilder, 114 William St., regarding access to commercial properties on State Street.

Mrs. Corriveau said abutting property owners will be contacted in regards to the purchase of the property.

Mayor Graham said if the property can't be divided, it must be sold.

Councilman Smith said there was a similar problem with Shooties.

Mr. McWayne said there are three properties involved. He said there is a ten foot right-of-way behind the commercial properties.



Mrs. Corriveau presented to the Council a press release regarding Commodity Waste Agreement to Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence Counties and the City of Watertown. The agreement brings waste in from outside the tri-county area but from inside the state. The resolution from 2004 authorizes the City Manager to sign it.

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**Standard of Cover – City Fire Department**

Fire Chief Daniel Gaumont presented to Council the Watertown Fire Department’s “Standard of Cover” which combines policies and procedures that establish adequate distribution and concentration of resources along with service level objectives. This “Standard of Cover” will become a guide for future planning and resource development.

Mayor Graham asked what is an example of a low risk structure.

Chief Gaumont said a free-standing residential garage is low risk.

Councilman Clough asked if the buildings were inspected by firefighters.

Chief Gaumont replied that the firefighters take a look at the structures and assess the risks.

He said the City Fire Department responds to fires within 3 minutes, 98% of the time.

Mayor Graham asked how the policy recommendation coincides with the City Manager’s.

Mrs. Corriveau responded that it depends on how the resolution is drafted. Council will be presented with the process by which the department is currently responding. She said the Standard of Cover provides a basis for where the department is today.

Councilman Clough asked why other departments aren’t going through this process.

Chief Gaumont said this is a slow process and is uncommon in the Northeast.

Councilman Clough asked what benefits this Standard of Cover has for the City or Department.

Chief Gaumont replied that the department is eligible for federal grants which allows the department to purchase water rescue equipment and educational tools for the public. He said the City only pays 10% and also saves on insurance by being accredited.

Mayor Graham asked what the future of fire protection is in this country.

Chief Gaumont said he sees volunteerism diminishing.

Councilman Bradley remarked that volunteerism is at an all-time low.

Chief Gaumont answered questions posed by the Council.

Work Session ended at 8:32 p.m.

*Amanda C. Lewis*

Deputy City Clerk